

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed March 4, 2004, in which the Examiner identified two patentably distinct species of the claimed invention. With this Amendment, Applicant has added new claims 19-24. Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant believes that the withdrawal of claim 18 as being drawn to a non-elected invention is improper. In particular, claim 18 depends from a generic or linking claim 17, which is presently under examination. Accordingly, Applicant requests that claim 18 be reentered into the prosecution of the present application as being directed to an elected invention.

In Section 1 of the Office Action, the Examiner identified two patentably distinct species of the claimed invention: Species I illustrated in FIG. 6; and Species II illustrated in FIG. 7. Applicant hereby elects to prosecute, with traverse, Species I illustrated in FIG. 6, on which claims 9, 11-18, 19, and 21-24 are readable.

Applicant respectfully believes that the restriction is improper due to the existence of generic claims. Although the Examiner indicated in the Office Action that no claims were generic, the Examiner found claim 9 to be readable on both Species I and Species II. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 9 is inherently generic. Additionally, Applicant submits that claim 19 is generic since it is readable on both Species I and Species II. As a result, Applicant requests that the restriction be withdrawn.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

By: 

Brian D. Kaul, Reg. No. 41,885
Suite 1600 - International Centre
900 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3319
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312

BDK/djb